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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 001474

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [FAIR](#) [ECON](#) [ECPS](#) [ELAB](#) [EWWT](#) [PGOV](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: CIVIL SERVANTS REMAIN AT WORK DESPITE CONTINUING TENSIONS

REF: A. KINSHASA 250

[B](#). KINSHASA 450

[C](#). KINSHASA 1399

[1](#)1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for internet distribution.

[1](#)2. (U) Summary. Despite the failure of negotiations between the GDRC and various unions earlier this year, most civil servants have returned to work. Isolated strikes have since occurred in several public enterprises and services, but general striking has not resumed. Civil servants remain frustrated, but are disorganized and have few alternatives but to continue working for meager salaries that often go unpaid. Inter-union tensions are running high, with various groups attempting instigate another general strike. The GDRC is attempting to co-opt individual unions in order to prevent this. End Summary.

[1](#)3. (U) In late June and early July, Kinshasa saw renewed striking by several public enterprises and services including ONATRA (transportation), RVF (river commerce), RVM (maritime trade), OFIDA (customs), and OCPT (postal and telecommunications). (Note. A civil service general strike in February 2004 was suspended pending further negotiations with the GDRC. However, the GDRC refuses to budge past FC 10,000 total salary/month for the lowest paid worker. See refs A and B. End Note.) These strikes were intended to protest both salary arrears and the continuing lack of resolution to the GDRC-civil service salary debate. Again, civil servants quickly returned to work, this time after the GDRC agreed to distribute a portion of their unpaid wages (ref C). (Note. To date, few of these promised disbursements have been made. End Note.)

[1](#)4. (SBU) In late July, local press reported that air traffic controllers (ATCs) of Regie des Voies Aeriennes (RVA) and Aviation Civile were preparing to strike. Econoffs interviewed ATCs and RVA management and determined that strike rumors were unfounded and could be attributed either to attempts by various unions to instigate another general strike or internal political wrangling amongst RVA leadership (ref C).

[1](#)5. (SBU) RVA and Aviation Civile are critical government enterprises controlling overflight and landing rights and fees. They not only provide revenue to the GDRC, but control the primary means for moving people and commercial goods within the country. Recognizing these facts, the GDRC moved swiftly to end a strike by ATCs at the N'Djili airport in late February (ref B). (Comment. In attempting to instigate a second ATC strike, union heads were likely seeking to capitalize on RVA and Aviation Civile's influence in the GDRC to gain concessions for all civil servants. However, as the GDRC pays RVA and Aviation Civile employees decent salaries on a relatively timely basis, ATCs had little incentive to risk their jobs by striking. End Comment.)

[1](#)6. (SBU) Between 27 July and 3 August, Econoffs met with representatives of various unions and public enterprises including SLC (Syndicat Libre du Congo), CONAMAFET (Confederation Nationale des Mandataires et Agents de l'Etat), FOSYFET (Force Syndicale des Agents et Fonctionnaires de l'Etat), SYNAFET (Syndicat National des Agents et Fonctionnaires de l'Etat et Para-Etatiques), and RVF. Most of the representatives offered little substantive information regarding their intentions or organizational capacities, but preferred instead to discuss their sentiments towards the GDRC. These ranged from mildly distrustful to incensed, with Mr. Emery Tshipamba of SYNAFET calling the GDRC's most recent salary offer "a crime akin to social genocide."

[1](#)7. (SBU) Mr. Mutumoyi of SLC and Mr. Mayala of CONAMAFET mentioned repeatedly that the February general strike had not ended, but was merely "suspended" and could be resumed at any time. Similar veiled threats of further striking were a common theme, but no specific dates or groups were mentioned.

[1](#)8. (SBU) Comment. Labor unrest will likely continue, but not on the scale seen in February 2004. Numerous civil service

unions compete against one another for membership and government attention. This serves to dilute their influence in labor negotiations with the GDRC. Attempts to organize another general strike have been easily stymied by the GDRC, which selectively disburses salary arrears (as in the case of the July strikes) or negotiates unilaterally with one or another union (as with the ATCs) to divide and conquer the civil service labor front. End Comment.  
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